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# AL QUESTIONS

## BRIEFLY ANSWERED

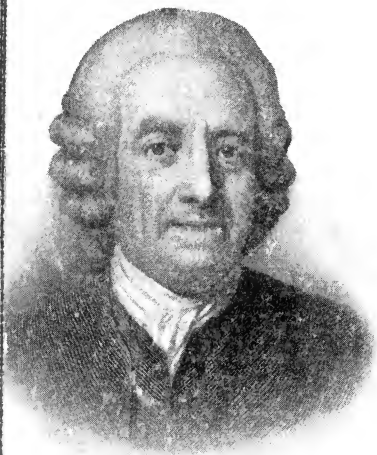
de to Right Thinking and Living

By

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A Minister of the New Church

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*Em-Swedenborg.*

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## THIS CHURCH

is "The Church of the New Jerusalem," briefly called "The New Church," and popularly known as "The Swedenborgian Church." It has no similarity to the Swedish Church or to the Jewish Church. It is different from all others. It is the New Christian Church of the New Age. It rests squarely on the Bible, now opened as to its Internal Meaning in the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, the Seer and Revelator.

## CENTRAL DOCTRINE

God Himself became Flesh in the body of Jesus Christ. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the three elements of the One and only God, united in One Person, as heat, light and radiation are united in one sun.

Jesus Christ, our risen and glorified Savior, is Jehovah God in a Divine Human Body.

The Practical Doctrine of the New Church is the Light of Love in service.

## VITAL QUESTIONS

### 1. What is the New Church?

Answer.—The New Church is the New Form of the Christian Church in the New Era now evolving. "Behold, I make all things new."

### 2. From what source are the teachings of the New Church derived?

Answer.—All the teachings of the New Church are derived from the Word of God in the light of its Internal or Spiritual Sense, which is now revealed.

### 3. What is the Central Teaching of the Word as thus lighted from within?

Answer.—The Central Teaching of the Word is that Jehovah God is one in person and in essence, and that Jesus Christ, in His risen and glorified form, is Jehovah God in a Divine human body.

### 4. What relation does Emanuel Swedenborg bear to the New Church?

Answer.—Swedenborg, the seer and revelator, signs himself: "Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ." He was simply the human agent through whom the Lord effected the opening of the Word as to its internal sense.

### 5. What is Religion?

Answer.—Religion is the life of God's Word working in the minds and lives of men. All religion relates to Life, and the life of religion is Service.

**6...What is Life?**

**Answer.**—Life is Love in action. The quality of action is determined by the quality of the love and of the knowledge by which it is directed. God is Life in its Source. He alone has life in Himself.

**7. What is Man?**

**Answer.**—Man is an organized form, created to receive life from God. Man has no life in himself, although he appears to have in himself the life which inflows momentarily from God, since he is created in the image of God. When this appearance is taken for the reality the life becomes perverted and changed in quality.

**8. What are the Centers of Action?**

**Answer.**—There are two opposite Centers from which action proceeds. The true center is the Love of God, —the false center is the Love of Self. The man who acts from the true center, in the light of true intelligence, becomes a spiritual man; the man who acts from the false center, in the fatuous light of the senses, remains a merely natural man. The purpose of life on earth is attained when the center of action has become changed from the love of self to the love of God.

**9. Why are we first born into a body of flesh and blood in a material world?**

**Answer.**—Because this material environment is the best in which to learn the first lessons of life and to lay the solid foundation of the house in which we are to live forever.

10. What fact as to the first birth makes it necessary that we be born again in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven?

Answer.—The mind or spirit of man is a house of three stories. At the first birth the lower story, which is the seat of our conscious life, is in direct opposition to the love of God and the neighbor. The second birth is necessary as the means of changing the center of action from the love of self to the heavenly center.

11. What is Salvation?

Answer.—Salvation is not escape from punishment for wrong doing — this is impossible — but the being saved from sinning and the inclination thereto.

- 12.—Why is it divinely ordered that one must work out his own salvation?

Answer.—Work is motion effected against resistance. By overcoming the resistance of the natural to the spiritual the work of salvation is done. This work must be done as of one's self from the power of the indwelling Father. "The Father, who dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

13. What use is subserved by the opposition of the natural mind to the spiritual mind?

Answer.—This opposition by its reaction supplies a basis of action without which the progressive work of regeneration could not take place. Through regeneration, the natural mind is brought into harmony

with the spiritual mind, and thereafter cooperates with it and the Lord.

#### 14. What is the Use of Prayer?

Answer.—Since God knows what things we have need of before we ask Him and prayer can effect no change in God, many people are asking, "Then why should we pray?" Mark well the answer. Prayer is the all-powerful means by which the natural mind is opened to the inflow of light and power from God. All power descends from God in the soul and becomes effective as it is received in the things of the lower mind and body. To this end the lower mind must turn to the Lord and open upward and inward. In those who look to Him the Lord continually flows into the will with power to shun what is evil, and into the understanding with power to think what is true, but no one can do the one without at the same time he does the other.

If one turns away from the Lord and looks only to temporal things for temporal ends, the mind becomes closed to heaven and the Lord cannot enter. He is standing at the door. It is for us to hear his voice and open the door. Prayer does not change God, but enables God to change us, and to use us for the help of others. True prayer is always answered. "If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you."



**15. What are Laws of Order?**

Answer.—Order is the perfect arrangement of created things in their mutual relations and in their relation to the Creator. The laws of order are the divine methods and channels by which life inflows from its Source into all forms created to receive it and by which these forms are developed and sustained.

**16. What is Sin?**

Answer.—Sin is disorder. Sin is the turning away from God and the breaking of the laws by which only He can give life. When life is thus rejected death ensues. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Sin is the process of spiritual death.

**17. What is Repentance?**

Answer.—Repentance is not only of the lips but of the life. Repentance is the change in mind, heart and life of one who, recognizing the nature of sin and humbly confessing his transgressions, comes to himself, and turns again from death unto life. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

**18. What is Forgiveness?**

Answer.—Forgiveness is not an excusing of a wrong deed, but the undoing of its effect on character. This divine undoing is dependent on man's co-operation. Forgiveness is the removal of spiritual disease with impending death, and the restoration to health of one has ceased to break the laws of life. The Lord is ever eager to forgive

and only waits upon our willingness to be forgiven.

"I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God, wherefore turn and live."

God punishes no one in this world or the next. Sin involves its own punishment in the loss of life, even as repentance involves its own reward in the renewal of life.

## THE WORD.

### 19. What is the Word?

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Answer.—The Word is contained in the sacred book called the Bible. The Word is the Divine Life conveyed in the words of God. "The words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life." In the beginning was the Word and the Word is God coming down and giving Himself to angels in heaven and to men on earth.

### 20. How is the Internal or Spiritual Sense of the Word—referred to in Question No. 2—related to the External or Literal Sense?

Answer.—The relation is the vital one of the soul to the body in man. The internal sense is the pure truth of life; it reveals God as he really is and as he always appears to the pure in heart; a God of unchanging love; our Heavenly Father, full of tender compassion for all His children. The internal sense is free from all apparent contradictions and inconsistencies.

In the literal sense, on the other hand, the truth is veiled in accommodation to appearances and the various states of men. In the letter God is de-

picted as he appears to men in conditions of order and of disorder, now as a loving Father, and now as a God of wrath and vengeful anger. The letter is in correspondence to the states of men. The letter is the Lord's outer garment which is stained with blood by reason of the violence done to the Word.

As in nature, so in the letter of the Word, the real truth is often just opposite to the appearance. The sun appears to rise in the East by reason of the earth's opposite motion. We speak according to the appearance. God appears angry to the wicked by reason of their turning away from his unchanging love. The Bible speaks according to the appearance. To get at the truth we must look beyond mere appearances to the inner spiritual sense. This we are enabled to do by aid of the divine Law of Symbolism which is now revealed.

21. What is the Divine Law of Symbolism referred to in the answer to Question 20?

Answer.—Divine laws reveal the ways in which God works. The laws of nature reveal the ways in which God creates and sustains the external world. The laws of revelation reveal the ways in which God creates and sustains the internal world. These two worlds are related according to a definite law, which is the divine law of creative symbolism. Creation is not the making of things out of nothing as many have assumed. Creation is the moulding of forms out of a substantial emanation from God as the Infinite Center. In

the process of creation the same thing takes on objective form on successive planes from the innermost to the outermost. A lower form is the symbol or representative of the preceding higher form in and by which divine creative energy operates in its descent. The law of symbolism is the divine method according to which outer forms are evolved from inner forms and according to which they are held together in a fixed relation to each other and to the central Source. This conjunctive relation is the vital one of cause and effect. Everything in the natural world is the active symbol of a corresponding thing in the spiritual world from which it springs.

22. By what other name is divine symbolism known?

Answer.—In the writings of Swedenborg the relation of an object to its spiritual counterpart is called "Correspondence," and the entire classified knowledge of the objective world in its symbolic relation to the spiritual world is called "The Science of Correspondences."

23. Is a knowledge of correspondences necessary to the understanding of the Scriptures?

Answer.—Yes, because the Holy Book is written according to the science of correspondences, possessing an inner and an outer structure like the soul and body in man. The Science of Correspondences is the golden key which unlocks the spiritual sense, revealing the soul in the body of the letter. By aid of this key the entire letter of the Word

becomes luminous with heavenly light and overflowing with practical meaning.

24. How, for example, does a knowledge of correspondences remove obscurity from the Bible teaching concerning the Second Coming of the Lord?

Answer.—The Bible speaks repeatedly of the Second Coming of the Lord as the coming of the Son of Man. In Mark we read: "And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and glory." Again in the Old Testament in Daniel: "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven."

Without a knowledge of correspondences, which make known the internal sense, men have understood the Bible to mean that God will come again in a body of flesh and be seen in the clouds of the sky. This is an error. The meaning is that the Lord will come as the Soul of the Word and make manifest the Soul in the Body of the Word. The name Son of Man always designates God as the Humanized Word, and the clouds of heaven symbolize the letter or body of the Word. When the letter is opened as to the spiritual sense the light of the Soul shines forth with power and great glory.

The Second Coming has already taken place. The Lord has effected his Second Coming by revealing the spiritual sense of the Word. He has done this through the agency of a man specially endowed and prepared for this supreme work. Swedenborg signs himself "Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ."

The Lord has thus come as the inner light of the Word which is the light of heaven. The testimony concerning Jesus is the spirit of prophecy in all the Scriptures,—it is the Soul of the Word of which the letter is the body.

**25. What, in a summary, are the Leading Doctrines of the New Jerusalem?**

Answer.—The leading doctrines are four in number:

(a) The Doctrine of the Lord. In this central doctrine is a rational unfoldment from the Word that God is one in person and in essence and that the three essentials of Father, Son and Holy Spirit are embodied and manifested in the Glorified Humanity of Jesus Christ.

(b) The Doctrine of the Holy Scripture. In this doctrine it is taught that in the Holy Scripture or Word there is a Spiritual Sense hitherto unknown; that the Sense of the Letter of the Word is the Basis and Support of its Spiritual Sense—that Divine Truth in the Sense of the Letter is in its Fullness, it is Holiness, and in its Power—that by means of the Sense of the Letter of the Word there is conjunction with the Lord and Association with the Angels—that the Word is in all the Heavens and is the Source of Angelic Wisdom—that the Church is from the Word and is such as is its understanding of the Word—that the Word cannot be understood without doctrine and that the genuine truth which must be of Doctrine appears in the sense of the letter to none but those who are in enlightenment from the Lord.

(c) The Doctrine of Life. In this doctrine it is taught that All Religion is

of the Life and the Life of Religion is to do that which is good—that no one can from himself do that which is really good—that in proportion as a man shuns evils as sins he does what is good, not from himself but from the Lord—that a man in shunning evils as sins must act in freedom as from himself—but from the Lord's power—which he must ask for.

(d) The Doctrine of Faith. In this doctrine it is taught that Faith is an internal acknowledgment of Truth; that this internal acknowledgment of Truth exists with none but those who are in Charity, which is the love of the neighbor—that the knowledge of what is good and true is but the material out of which living faith can be formed—that charity, or the love of the neighbor, is the life of faith, its soul and its essence—that truth separated from love in action destroys the church and all things of it.

## EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

Emanuel Swedenborg was born at Stockholm, Sweden, in 1688—he died in London in 1772 at the age of 84 years.

For 55 years he devoted his marvelous abilities to scientific investigation in various realms of nature, writing profound treatises on many subjects. His great volumes on the Brain excite the wonder of specialists at the present day.

His services to the state in the realm of mines and mining led to his elevation to a seat in the House of Nobles and he served as a member of the Swedish Senate until the time of his death.

He anticipated many modern discoveries and inventions.

After his fifty-fifth year he gave up his scientific pursuits, having been called, as he solemnly asserts, to a higher work. Thereafter, in fulfillment of his appointed mission, he wrote on spiritual subjects, foremost among which was the Inner Meaning of the Word of God.

### STATEMENTS OF SWEDENBORG CONCERNING HIS MISSION

“It is in everybody’s mouth that the Word is from God, is Divinely inspired, and is therefore holy; and yet hitherto no one has known wherein it is Divine. For in the letter the Word appears like a common writing \* \* \*. Yet the style of the Word is the Divine style itself, with which no other style, however sublime and excellent it may seem, is at all to be compared. \* \* \* The style of the Word is such that there is holiness in every sentence, in every word, and in some places in even the very letters. This is why the Word conjoins man with



the Lord, and opens heaven \* \* \*. Therefore in order to remove all doubt as to such being the character of the Word, the Lord has revealed to me the Word's internal sense. In its essence this sense is spiritual, and in relation to the external sense, which is natural, is as soul is to body. This sense is the spirit which gives life to the letter; it can therefore bear witness to the Divinity and Holiness of the Word, and convince even the natural man, if he is willing to be convinced."

—Doctrine of Sacred Scripture, 1-4.

The man of the Church at this day knows scarce anything of heaven and hell, or of his own life after death, although these things are all described in the Word. Indeed, many who are born within the Church even deny them, saying in their heart, Who has come from that world and told us? Lest therefore such denial, prevailing especially with those who have much worldly wisdom, should also infect and corrupt the simple in heart and the simple in faith, it has been given me to be in company with angels and to talk with them as man with man, and also to see what is in the heavens and what is in the hells, and this for thirteen years. Therefore I can now describe these things from what I have heard and seen, in the hope that thus ignorance may be enlightened and unbelief dispelled. That at this day such immediate revelation exists, is because this is what is meant by the coming of the Lord.

—Heaven and Hell, 1.

"The Second Coming of the Lord is effected by means of a man, before whom He has manifested Himself in Person, and whom He has filled with His Spirit, to teach the Doctrines of the New Church through the Word, from Him.

—True Christian Religion 778.

## TESTIMONY OF GREAT MINDS CONCERNING SWEDENBORG

John Greenleaf Whittier

"There is one grand and beautiful underlying all his revelations about future life."

Thomas Carlyle

"One of the loftiest minds in the of mind \* \* \*. One of the spiritual that will shine brighter as the years go

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

"To my mind the only light that has cast on the other life is found in Swedenborg's philosophy. It explains much that is incomprehensible."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

"The truths passing out of Swedenborg's system into general circulation are now with every day, qualifying the views and creeds of all churches, and of men of every church."

Helen Keller

"To our conception of God, the Word of the Hereafter, which we have received in trust from ages of unproved faith, Swedenborg gives a new actuality, which is as startling, as thrilling as the angel-song at the birth of the Lord's birth. He brings fresh testimony to support our hope that the veil will be drawn from unseeing eyes, that the ear shall be quickened, and dumb men gladdened with speech."

Henry James, Sr.

"Emanuel Swedenborg had the sanest and most far-reaching intellect this age has ever known."

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